

*Of the Propagation of the Gospel
in Foreign Parts.*

N^o 4.

A

S E R M O N

Preach'd at

St. Mary-le-Bow, Feb. 18. 170³₄.

Before the

S O C I E T Y

Incorporated for that purpose.

Exhorting all Persons in their Stations, to
assist so Glorious a Design.

By the Right Reverend Father in G O D, *Gilbert*
Lord Bishop of *Sarum*.

L O N D O N,

Printed by *Joseph Downing* in *Bartholomew-Close* near
West-Smithfield, 1704.

*At a General Meeting of the Society for
Propagating the Gospel in Fo-
reign Parts, Friday the 18th of Fe-
bruary 170³₄.*

A Greed, That the Thanks of the
Society be given to the Lord
Bishop of *Salisbury*, for his Sermon
preach'd this Day in the Church of
St. Mary-le-Bow.

Agreed, That his Lordship be de-
fired to print the same.

John Chamberlayne, Secretary.

Malachi I. Ver. xi

For from the rising of the Sun unto the going down of the same, My Name shall be great among the Gentiles: and in every place, Incense shall be offered unto my Name, and a pure Offering: for my Name shall be Great among the Heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts.

IT is one of the darkest parts of Providence, that God should have chosen the People of one Race and Nation, to be his *Peculiar*, blessed with good Laws, and such a degree of the Knowledge of his Nature, as delivered them from the Blindness of all other Nations, who seemed as forsaken and left to the Tyranny of the God of this World; by which means Superstition, Idolatry, and Magick, besides the Immoralities of all kinds, broke in upon them, and corrupted them. But such is the force of Prejudice, that tho' to an indifferent Observer, it is much more suitable to the Attributes of God, that He should at last bless all Nations with the Knowledge of His

B Name,

Name, than that it should be for some Ages confined to one only ; yet this was the great Rock of Offence to the *Jews*, when they saw the Apostles preached the Gospel to all Nations as well as to them, with this only difference, that they offered it *first to the Jews, and then to the Gentiles*. They were offended at our Saviour's mean Appearance, not as a Conquerour, to *restore the Kingdom*, and to subdue all about them, as *David* did, in whose Throne the *Messias* was to sit : from which they inferr'd, that he was to *Gird his Sword upon his Thigh*, and to conquer all his Enemies.

This did rise to higher degrees of Fury, when the Apostles addressed themselves to the *Gentiles*, and received them into equal Privileges with the *Jews*, without obliging them to Circumcision, or the Observance of the *Mosaical Law*. And yet they might have seen very express Promises of this from God's first Covenant with *Abraham*, in whose Seed all the Nations of the Earth were to be blessed ; which was renewed to *Isaac* and to *Jacob*. While the time of the *Messias* coming was advancing nearer and nearer, the Prophecies grew fuller and clearer by a gradual Encrease, as the Sky grows brighter when the Sun is nearer rising : this great and to us most happy opening of the Light, in the Promises made of the calling the *Gentile World*, advanced by degrees.

Gen. xviii.

18.

--xxii. 18.

--xvi. 4.

--xxviii.

14.

We

We have in the whole Book of the *Psalms*, many Intimations of God's being to be magnified among the *Nations*, that is, the *Gentiles*, as well as by the *People*, that is, the *Jewish Nation*. *Isaiah* carries this on in clearer Predictions chiefly towards the end of his Prophecy: particularly in his last Chapter. *Daniel* is the fullest of all as to the Time and the Usage of the *Messias*, and as to the terrible Effects of his being cut off, and their being to be no more his People. But now Prophecy was to be sealed up: it ended in *Malachi*. And this seems to be the end of the first Period, unto which *Daniel* divided his *Weeks*, which is seven Weeks or forty nine Years, according to the Observation of a Venerable and Learned Prelate of this Church.

These begin at the Commandment that *Nehemiah* brought over to build *Jerusalem*. He was then probably a young Man, the King's Cup-bearer: for as we see by *Daniel*, the Eastern Princes used to have such stand before them. He was confirmed in his Authority twelve year after this: so that if we allow him 30 Years more of Life, (no great Age in all) that will carry us down to the last of these seven Weeks.

Malachi in several parts of his Prophecy charges the *Jews*, but more particularly the Priests, for some Corruptions that were contrary to the Reformation made by *Nehemiah*: so it is probable

Isa. xlii. 1.
4. —xlix.
1, 6. —lv.
5. —lx. 3.
—lxv. 1.
—lxvi. from
1. to the
end.
Dan. ix.
26, 27.

Neh. xiii.

6.

that this Prophecy was given out some few Years after his Death. *Nehemiah* had taken the Peoples Oaths and Seals to observe the Laws of *Moses*, in several Instances, particularly in their Oblations, the release of Jubilee, the not taking Usury, and the not Marrying with the Heathen Nations round about them. It is not to be doubted, but a Man of so good a Mind as *Nehemiah's* was, when fortified by the Authority of the King of *Persia*, would take care of a Covenant so solemnly made by his own Order. And it is to be presumed, that the *Jews* had some sense of their Obligations to him, at least for some time after his Death: A Deliverer is not every where soon forgotten: yet when *Malachi* prophesied, they were offering polluted Bread and blemished Sacrifices, and by these they profaned the Altar and the Table of the Lord. They were dealing treacherously against their Brethren, and marrying the Daughters of a strange God; that is, Idolaters. The Prophet upon that tells them, in the Name of God, that he had no Pleasure in them, and that he would not accept an Offering at their hand.

Neh. v. 6.
--v. 30, to
the end.

Mal. i. 7.
--ii. 10, 11.

And that they might not upon that presume so far as to think that God could not cast them off, for then He would have none to worship Him, he in the words of the Text prophesies, that an Offering should be made unto God from the rising of the Sun, even unto the going down of the same; that is,

is, over the whole face of the Earth, expressed as it was then understood, by one Hemisphere, over which the Sun did rise and set: but since we do now know the Course of the Heavenly Bodies, as well as the Earth's being inhabited quite round, such Phrases as these are not to be taken strictly, but do import the whole Race of Mankind, unless we will restrain the Prophecy to the *Roman Empire*: to all the parts of which the Christian Religion was quickly carried after the first Commission given to the Apostles. But it may be reasonably enough supposed, that there is a time marked in the Councils of God in which this Everlasting Gospel is to be preached to *every Creature under Heaven*, in which *the Name of God will be great among the Gentiles*; that is, He will be honoured and worshipped by them, for that is properly the *hallowing* or *magnifying* of his Name.

Incense is the Emblem of Prayer: It was laid over a Censer of Coals, and set on the Altar in the holy place, where it continued smoaking till the next return of the daily Sacrifice. The sweet Savour, the long continuance of its small and fragrant Steams, and its being always on the Altar, from the one hour of Sacrifice to the next, carry such plain allusions to Prayer, that it is not necessary to insist longer on this matter. David desires that his Prayer ^{Psal. cxli.} might be set forth before God as Incense. These are ^{2.} the

Rev. viii.
3.

the Odours and Prayers of the Saints: whose Breasts must be set a flaming by a Coal from the Altar, as well as the Prayers must be offered up by their Great High Priest. So that by *Incense* here, is not to be meant the burning Perfumes in our Temples, or at our Worship, but in a prophetick figure, this foretels, that pure and acceptable Prayers should be offered up to God, in all the parts of the World.

Levit. ii. 1.

A pure Offering, or *Mincha*, is a term that has occasioned some Dispute. It is true, that the Meat-offerings that were made of Meal and Oil are generally expressed by the word *Mincha*, rendred here *Offering*; from thence some of the Church of Rome do infer, that this is a Prophecy concerning that which they call *the Sacrifice of the Mass*: and that it is here foretold that an Offering of Bread should be made to God all the World over. In the true sense of such an Oblation of Meal, we are not much concerned, tho' this were admitted to be here meant, for we offer Bread and Wine on the Altar: and in that sense this was and may be still called a *Sacrifice*. But if the Doctrine of the Church of Rome is true, there is no breaden Sacrifice among them: but only the shew and appearance of it; for they believe the Substance of the Bread as gone, when they offer it up to God.

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The word made use of here, does not necessarily infer an Oblation of Bread; but any Oblation in general. The Presents that *Jacob* sent to appease his Brother *Eſau*, and those he sent to *Egypt*, are called *Mincha*: which shews, that in *Moses* time the word stood in a larger sense for any Gift or Oblation. And this is still so universally understood by the *Jews*, that they call the whole daily Worship, and all that time in which they think Men are obliged to offer up their Morning and Evening Prayers, by the name *Mincha*. They call the great *Mincha*, all the time in the Morning from the Sun rising till about ten a Clock: in some part of which every Man, they hold, is obliged to say his Morning Prayers; and likewise all that time in the Evening from the declining of the Sun, a little past Noon, till his setting, was called the great *Mincha*, which by another Phrase was called the Time between the two Evenings.

Gen.
xxxii. 20.
--xliii. 11.

Buxtorff.

St. Peter went to Prayer when the great *Mincha* began, and the little *Mincha* was the hour in which the daily Sacrifice and the Incense was offered in the Temple, which was about nine in the morning, and till that was over, they did not break their Fast: So that St. Peter said the Apostles could not be supposed to be drunk, since it was not the third hour of the day when they were filled with the Holy Ghost on the great Pentecost. This was called the

Acts x. 9.

Acts ii. 15.

2 Kings
iii. 20.

Acts iii. 1.
-x. 3.

the Meat-offering, by the figure of a part for the whole, for it stands sometimes for the whole Morning Service. The Evening little *Mincha*, begun after three a Clock. This was their ninth hour, called the hour of Prayer, in which St. Peter and St. John went into the Temple, and at that hour Cornelius was praying, and was by an Angel directed to send for St. Peter. By all this it is plain, that by *Mincha* we are to understand the daily Service and Worship of God: and that no Inference can be made from the more restrained sense of this *Mincha*, that is here well rendred Offering.

Mal. iii.
1, 2, 3.

So the meaning of this Prophetick passage is, that whereas the Knowledge of God was then confined to one Nation, and restrained to one Place, that was to be opened afterwards to all Nations and in all Places; and when the Lord whom they sought, and the Messenger of the Covenant in whom they delighted should come, he would come as a Refiners Fire: and purifie the Sons of Levi, and purge them as Gold and Silver: So that they should offer to the Lord in Righteousness.

Then the Doctrine of this *Messias* was to be spread to all the Ends of the Earth: At first, and that very quickly, over the Roman Empire, that was then understood by the term that strictly signifies the *habitable World*. This was accomplished to the amazement of the whole World, when a few
poor

poor Fishermen, by virtue of that Power that they received from on high, went out from Jerusalem, first to Syria, then to Arabia, afterwards to Cyprus, and over all Asia the lesser: next to Marcedonia, and from thence to all Greece, as far as to Corinth, in which the Prophecy of Zechary was more fully accomplished than in the Persons of the Maccabees, ^{Zech. ix.} That the Sons of Zion should be raised against the Sons ^{13.} of Greece, and be made as the Sword of a mighty man to conquer and subdue. From Greece the Gospel went to Illyricum: and it reached at last even to Rome it self; from whence it was spread into the other Towns of Italy; and that in little more than in twenty Years time.

Here the Scripture Accounts fail us: for the design in delivering these Transactions in the Canon of the Scripture, was not to inform us about Ecclesiastical History; but to shew us how the Prophecies concerning the Calling of the Gentile World, and of the Roman Empire, to the Knowledge of the Messias, before the utter Rejection of the Jews, and the Destruction of Jerusalem, how these, I say, were accomplished. The History of the Church is very defective with relation to its first and best times: yet enough remains to shew us how speedy a Progress the Gospel made. Not to mention what we find in Tacitus, Pliny, and even in Lucian himself. This was an evident Com-
C pletion

Mat. xxiv.

14.

pletion of our Saviour's Prophecy, that the *Gospel of the Kingdom* (of God) *should be preached in all the World, for a Witness to all Nations, before the End should come*; that is, before the *Jewish Nation* should be destroyed, and their Temple be burnt down. All the Malice and diligence of the *Jews*, both in the Calumnies that they cast on the Apostles and their first Converts, and the Persecution that they stirred up against them, was not able to oppose that Spirit and Power with which they both preached and wrought Miracles: nor could the more authorized Violences of the Heathens, tho' they had the Laws on their side, and the Power in their hands, stifle or destroy this great Work of God: which was spread as well as purged by every new Persecution: and in them all became more than Conquerour; so that it filled the whole Empire, and at last it subdued the very Emperours themselves.

These were the first glorious days of the Church. This was its head of Gold, pure and unallayed. There were afterwards great Accessions made to this Holy Religion. In these too much mixture is to be found. Policy and Interest appear to have had their large share. In succeeding Ages Fraud and Fable were too much employed: and Violence and Force at last robbed the Church of its true Glory; much more than could be ballanced by all the addition of Numbers and Wealth that came with

with it: so that *Charles the Great*, who made as much Progress that way as any one ever yet did, in the end of his days came to reflect on all the methods he had long pursued, as directly contrary to the Rules of Christ and his Apostles, and of the first Christians, so that he concluded a long and wise Memorial prepared for a Synod of his Clergy thus, *That he ought to change his measures, and do many things that he had not till then thought on; and that he ought to lay aside many things that he had been pursuing so long.* These his wise and pious Reflections, were little considered by those that came after him; who went on in the same Methods, or rather in worse.

*Capit ad
Ann. 811.*

It pleased God about two hundred Year ago to open a new Scene. Great Discoveries were made, not only of the Eastern parts, of which we had some knowledge before, at least of their Productions, tho' we knew not how to come at them, till the *Portuguese* doubled the *Cape of good Hope*; but likewise of the Western World, of which we knew nothing before. The Methods of Providence are unsearchable: for here was a Harvest, and that a great one, if it had fallen into good hands. The poor ignorant Natives were struck with admiration of their new Masters, and disposed to an entire Submission to them in all things, and might have been easily brought to the Faith of Christ: but as the Christianity that was offered them

was only a ritual matter, accompanied with no Instruction; so the unexampled Cruelties and Barbarities that almost exceed belief with which they were treated, as they destroyed the greatest part of them, so they possessed the rest which escaped that savage Treatment with such unconquerable Prejudices against a Religion, which they are not able to examine or to distinguish, but take it in the gross, from what appeared in those who first came among them, that 'twill be a Miracle indeed if ever they come to have just Impressions of it. In the Eastern parts there was not strength enough to make such havock; so other Methods were to be taken.

Great are the Boastings made by the Church of *Rome* of their Missions in those parts, and of their Successes. But now, that other Nations have got footing there, this is seen through, and we are but too well assured how little we can rely on the pompous recitals that have been given out of *Xaviere* and their succeeding Missionaries. What a poor accession those nominal Christians bring to the Church, is alas but too visible.

If they made real Converts to Christianity, notwithstanding all the allay of Superstition that is mixed with it, we are taught by *St. Paul* to rejoice that *Christ is preached*. We are but too sure that these are false masters. Miracles reported at so great a distance, as done among poor and ignorant Multitudes,

Multitudes, and attested by those who intend to raise the Lustre of their Orders by such Narratives, will not be easily credited by those who have looked into their Practices nearer hand, where they are better known, and more strictly examined. The Charge that one Body among themselves has laid on the more boasted *Society*, that is still depending at *Rome*, goes deep, and is strongly supported; which is, that these Missionaries allow their Converts to assist in the Idolatrous Practices, Prayers and Sacrifices of the Heathens. This is denied by the *Society*, which pretends that these are only the Testimonies of civil Respect. Outward Appearances are certainly against them, and indifferent Persons that have travelled in those parts, do generally give it against them.

They by teaching Astronomy, and reforming the Calendar, have much recommended themselves to a Nation, fond of an exactness in those things. Surgery and the Knowledge of Physick has also got them much Credit. These are innocent and useful things, and tho' they are not the Signs of an Apostolical Mission, yet they may be allowed as just and prudent means to procure a ready welcome to the Preachers of a new Religion: but the Instructing those Nations in the *Tactics* of War, and in the Inventions of making havock of Mankind, by Bombs and other such destructive Machines,

chines, and the insinuating themselves into the confidence of Princes, by acquainting them with such pernicious Secrets, does not look like the Messengers of the *Prince of Peace*, *who came not to destroy Mens Lives, but to save them.* We have one great and just prejudice against all the pretended Miracles given out by them, as done in those parts, which is, that we hear not of that great one, which did not only authorize, but enable the Apostles to execute their Commission: and that was *the Gift of Tongues.*

This consisted not in some single miraculous Action, which some might affirm, while others denied it, and that was known only to a few: But this Miracle carried its own evidence with it: while every Man saw and heard some plain and illiterate Persons, who were advanced in Years, and had been bred in another Country, and to another Language, or at least to another Idiom, come among them, and speak to them in their own Language, without staying till they had acquired it by Instruction and Practice, and yet speaking it copiously and readily. An elevation of Thought, or a heat of Fancy, may carry a Man that has but an imperfect knowledge of a Language to speak it on some occasions, much more correctly and fluently than he can do at other times. But it is only a supernatural Power, that can give a Man a Language

guage of which he knows nothing. And as this was the most convincing of all Miracles, because the most evidently proved: so it was the great mean that enabled the Apostles to execute their Commission. They must have made a slow Progress, if they had been obliged to stay and learn the Language of every Country where they came; or to have furnished themselves with Interpreters, which we know is but a cold way of Intercourse, not apt to make great Impression.

Thus our Gospel was at first opened, and these were the first Credentials of the Apostolick Commission: and the nature of the thing seems to suggest, that as God is Uniform in all his ways; so if there is a Time marked by Him in which the World is to be converted by a miraculous Authority, that some measure of the same Gift will be again poured out. So that all Miracles, when they are without this, are justly to be suspected on this very account. It is confessed that this is wanting: so that a few words of a strange Language is all that they pretend they can speak, and that is not easily acquired, and when they have conned them, they are scarce understood by the People. Till somewhat of this appears we have reason to conclude, that the design of Propagating the Gospel, is to be managed only by such Methods as Wisdom and Zeal can suggest, without any more
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immediate Interposition from above in extraordinary and miraculous Assistances.

If it is then asked, how is this great Work to be set about? Or is it to be laid aside on the pretence of staying till the time in which supernatural and extraordinary Calls and Assistances come down from Heaven? It must be acknowledged the Work is difficult, and that we must not look for speedy or surprizing Successes: We cannot offer to the wild Natives of these parts those Arguments that are convincing in these parts of the World, where a Series of concurring Histories, a Succession of many Ages and Manuscripts that appear evidently to be of a great and established Antiquity, give proofs of Facts in the first Ages of Christianity that cannot be denied by those who enquire into them, and are willing to be satisfied about them. But no part of all this can be offered to Infidel and Savage Nations: who know not what Books are, nor what a Series of Time is; and so cannot be convinced by such Arguments, by which the Miracles that gave Authority to our Holy Faith, chiefly those of the Resurrection and Ascension of the Son of God, and the Effusion of the Holy Ghost, are proved to be true.

We have indeed other Arguments that may make a deep Impression on them, if hearkened to. We may, in imitation of the first Apologists for Christianity,

Christianity, shew them how preferable our Religion is to theirs: How much juster our apprehensions of God are, and how pure and simple our Worship is, in opposition to their gross Fables, wild Conceits, and barbarous or ludicrous ways of Worship. We can shew them what our Hopes and Fears are with relation to another State: and how much more suitable these are both to the Attributes of God and to the Nature of Man, than their apprehensions are. We can shew them what the Purity of our Religion is, in that inward Holiness that is formed in our Minds, and that spreads it self thro' all our Thoughts and Designs, as well as thro' all our Words and Actions: we can shew them how perfect and amiable a thing this inward and uniform Virtue is, and what wonderful Effects it must have on Mankind where it is received, mutual Confidence and universal Love rendring all Men not only safe, but happy in one another.

These are things that they may be made capable of, and the representing these oft to them must and will, in conclusion, produce great effects among them, especially if they see that the Persons who propose all this to them seem to believe it themselves. For indeed it will be a shameless thing to offer to persuade them to believe and profess a Religion, which, rude and savage as they are, they must needs see in the Lives of those

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called Christians, that they are not convinced themselves of those very things of which they talk so magnificently to others. Here certainly all the Attempts that are to be made on others must begin.

The moral part of the Christian Religion is that which will most effectually recommend it. This is visible and sensible to every Man: none are of so low a size, but they must conclude, that a Religion which makes Men just and charitable, sober and modest, sincere and faithful, compassionate and generous, has excellent Characters on it: On the other hand, all Men will make a quick Inference against a Religion, that consists only in a Name, and in some Opinions and Forms: and that has no other effects on Mens Tempers and Lives, but that they outwardly profess it, and have a concern for it, as Men are apt to have for the Honour of their Country, or of their Friends: that they assist at some publick Acts of it, with perhaps as little Reverence and Seriousness, as those of other Religions do shew upon their Solemnities; but that with all this, they are both ignorant of their Religion, and negligent in every performance of it: and in all their Dealings with others they are deceitful and cruel, false and perfidious: and besides all this, are vicious and brutal in their Appetites and Passions: Here is such a fence
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of Prejudices, that no Arguments will be able to break thro' it. But the Prejudices will be so much the stronger, if in this very Religion, that they profess, while they do thus disgrace it, there are plain and exprefs Rules given, contrary to all these Practices. This will fortifie Men in their ill Opinion of such Persons to a degree not easily to be conquered.

The chief strength of the first Apologies for Christianity lay, in the Appeals that they made to the Heathen World, concerning the change that was visible in those who became Christians: in their Justice and Probity, their Humility and Sobriety, and above all things, in their mutual Love to one another. This was so true and so evident, that two of the greatest Enemies of our Religion, Lucian, Julian, do own it to be so. There is certainly a greater closeness of arguing, and a better thread of discourse in our modern Apologies: but they have little Effect, chiefly on this Account, that we dare not make those Appeals: but must on the contrary appeal from the Lives of the greater part of Christians, to the Rules of Life given in these Books, in which this Religion is contained.

How true the Prejudices are that I have been now suggesting, against most of the Christians that go among *Infidels*, is but too plain to all who know the State of our Colonies. In some of them

nothing is pursued but Gain and Luxury : in others that lie wider, and more out of View, a gross Ignorance and a stupid Unconcernedness in every thing that relates to Religion, is but too visible. They go from hence but ill instructed : and that small measure of Knowledge not being improved by Reading and Conversation, it must wear out and sink to nothing. Their Children must be yet more ignorant than themselves, unless they are better furnished than they are both with Schools and Books. The narrow Provision of those who serve in the Gospel there, makes that they cannot furnish themselves with Books, and the other means of Study, unless they are better assisted.

Our Designs upon Aliens and Infidels must begin in the Instructing and Reforming our own People, in opening Schools every where, in sending over Books of good Instruction, and above all things, in encouraging and preparing many Labourers to go into that Harvest. I know the common ill disposition that many have to those of our Profession, will carry them to cast the heaviest part of the blame on us : and I will not deny but that in this respect, as well as in many more, we have great reason to humble our selves before God. But it must be confessed, that a long Voyage, a strange Countrey, and a very small

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Encouragement, that is both narrow and precarious, are things that will always make great Impressions on Flesh and Blood.

These things must be in some measure alter'd to the better if we would set this matter roundly a going. If the Numbers of the Labourers could be encreased, Schools be opened, and Books sent over, here would be both more Encouragement, as well as more matter to work with. As for the Natives, such of them as have not our Language, and are past their Youth, and that come among us full of Prejudice, it is not easie to say, what can be done to them. But if they were justly dealt with, and gently treated by our People; if they saw as much cause to esteem us for our Morals, as they do to admire us for our Ingeniousness; this might dispose them in time to think well both of us and of our Religion. This might give them a desire to come under our Protection, and to become our Friends and Allies: and from hence every thing might be hoped for in due time; of which we see some very promising beginnings already. They might be moved to send their Children among us to be taught both our Language and our Religion.

This must indeed be a work of time: former ill usage must be forgot: all Prejudices must be conquer'd, by a constant course of Justice and
Tender-

Tenderness towards them. If these Methods were taken, and steadily pursued in a series of some Years, we cannot doubt but the effect of them would begin soon to appear.

Blessed be they of the Lord who do effectually apply themselves to promote this Great and Glorious Work, here at home, as well as abroad: for indeed the Springs must begin here. You great Dealers in Trade, who have had so plentiful a Harvest in Temporal things, from the Productions of those Countries, and from the Industry of our Colonies settled among them, are, in a more especial manner, bound to minister to them in Spiritual things, at least in the means that may procure them to them.

It is the Glory of this City, and a Glory far beyond the Magnificence of its Buildings, or the Vastness of its Trade, that it is the greatest Fond of Charities now in the World. A Fond never to be exhausted, and of Charities that are neither corrupted with Vanity nor Superstition.

Some Years ago a few Gentlemen, with some of the Clergy and others, entred upon a Noble Design for *Propagating Christian Knowledge*. That was set on foot at a time when the Nation was charged with heavy Taxes; no great Encouragement for such an Undertaking: yet by the Blessing of God on their pious Attempts, the matter has succeeded beyond all Mens Expectation, while

while no Law set it on, and no great nor publick Stock was engaged in it : yet it still went on, and did spread its self into many parts of the Nation : Schools were set up in many Places, both in this Great City and in the Country ; in which Children are clothed and taught at the Charge of the free Contributors. Books are printed and sent about over the Nation : And in a few Years time, this matter has gained so much strength and Reputation, that we may justly reckon it so well fixed, that it will make a greater Progress, and is past the danger of miscarrying.

But as *Charity never faileth*, so the Zeal of those charitable Persons, whose Names ought to be had in perpetual remembrance, was not confined within the *four Seas* : it took a freer course, even to the *four Winds of Heaven*, to the remote and dark Corners of the Earth. They entred on the Design of supplying our Factories and Plantations, with the means of *Propagating Christian Knowledge* among them. But to make the Management legal and safe, under Royal Protection, and to bring in more to assist in the Execution of that which was too great for a small Handful ; Application was made to His late Majesty, whose Memory will be ever Glorious among us, let some do what they can to blemish it. He very readily approved of it, and ordered a *Charter* for making

king them a *Corporation*. This was among the last of the publick Actions of a Life, that had been all imployed in defending and securing true Religion, both here and elsewhere. It was suitable to all that had gone before, that, towards the End of it, He should give Life and Authority to so glorious an Undertaking, which is now under the particular Favour and Protection of Her Majesty, whose Heart is eminently set on all noble, pious, and charitable Designs, chiefly such as promote Religion.

This *Corporation* was no sooner formed than a great many more came in and concurred in it: some in the Church and others of the Laity, noble by their Blood, but much nobler by their Faith and Charity, joined to set the Work a going, and to try what could be either done at present, or put in a hopeful and promising way for the future. There has been a noble Liberality in those who have supported this now these Three Years, besides a great Gift of a *Thousand Pounds* from one charitable, but unknown Hand: the more charitable towards God, because unknown to Men, who would have no Share of her Reward on Earth, that she might have it full, shaken together, and running over in Heaven. We having now gone so far in this Matter, that we see how much more may be done if well assisted, do Address our
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selves in the first place to this great City, and to the several Bodies in it that are the most concerned in those Parts, to invite them to join in this pious and charitable Undertaking.

Shall I need to use any Arguments in a Matter that is so plain, and that calls so loudly to you? Shall I tell you what Reproaches are cast on the *Reformation* on this very account by those of the Church of *Rome*, who tell us often of their numerous Missions, and more numerous Converts; and make this one of the Marks of a true Church which they claim to themselves, and accuse us of the *Reformation*, as false Churches, for our Neglect in this. Let us not study to deny or to lessen any part of this; for whatever the Designs of the governing part of that Church and of the famous *Society* may be, yet still it is to be confessed, that great and laudable Attempts have been made by some among them: and that many have laboured in it with much pious Zeal, and indefatigable Industry, and that, under great Difficulties and many Hardships, and much Suffering. But instead of lessening what may be due to them, or of observing what may be amiss among them. Let us confess that we deserve severe Censures; and let us study to answer them for the future, by more Zeal and greater Diligence.

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Shall I tell you what we have often heard as a National Reflection, that none of the Protestant Churches have been so faulty in this respect, as we of this Church and Nation, while none had greater Advantages, in well established and populous Colonies, and in the vast Returns of a most advantageous Trade. Let us not enter into Arguments upon this Calculation, but fall on the most real ones to confute it for the future.

Let not our Plantations themselves have Cause to accuse us, that while they are hard at work for us, and while their Productions are so charged, that they have but a small part of the Gain that is made by them, so that they are too low to contribute much this way, yet that those among us, whose Dealings with them God has blessed with the hundred fold even in this World, are backward in assisting them in their Spiritual Concerns, when they are beginning to offer towards it themselves, even beyond their Strength.

In a Word, while our Colonies are as so many Mines of Wealth to us, and while such vast Numbers of Seamen are employed in so many hundreds of Ships as go backwards and forwards every Year in those Voyages, which breeds up a flourishing Nursery for our Fleets, that are the best Defence of our Nation; while we have so many Blessings coming home daily, shall we take no Care to
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secure those Blessings to us and to our Brethren in those Plantations? Shall we treat them not as Brethren, but as Beasts of Burden, and Creatures only made for Labour? Shall we export nothing for the good of their Souls, while we import so much for the raising our own Wealth from their Industry. Let every one look up to God, and then look into himself, and reflect on the Blessings he has received from God, and on the scanty Returns he has hitherto made for them. Let us consider that there lies a particular Demand on our Charity, when the Occasion bears a Proportion to the Blessings that have been received: Let those who have a true Zeal for the Honour of our Church, contribute to raise her Glory, which hitherto has been too little advanced this way, while those who divide from us in *New-England*, seem to have provok'd us to Jealousie on this Account.

Let us all *consider one another to provoke one another to Love and to good Works*. Let not the Objections that may be made against the thing, as if the Design were hopeless and must be unsuccessful, shut up any Man's Hand or his Heart. Things of this nature must go on slowly, and meet with great Obstructions and many Difficulties, chiefly at first; But when we consider the gradual Progress, that the civilizing of Nations, and that all Arts and Sciences have made, where no extraor-

dinary Blessing from God is to be expected, have we not much more Reason to expect Success, where the Work is so acceptable to God, that a more than ordinary Blessing may be well looked for, if we are not wanting on our Part. At least the setting about and the promoting such a pious Design will not want its Reward, even tho' it should want its Success.

I hope none will say, that while Taxes lie so heavy, new Charities ought not to be proposed. The face of Wealth and of Expence that appears over the whole Nation, but most eminently in this City, shews that the Charge we lie under, does not so much as restrain *Luxury*, *Vanity*, and *Prodigality*: And what Shame will it be if *Charity* is the only thing to be restrained by it?

I will not go into a Subject that is foreign both to my Profession, and to my present Purpose; but those who pretend to Calculate the best, tell us, that under all this Charge, the Stock and Wealth of the Nation is not impaired, but considerably encreased: If they reckon right, it must be confessed that this looks like one of the most amazing Paradoxes in Providence. While God seems to go out of his common Course in blessing us, Shall we study to do nothing suitable to such unusual Methods?

A *Reformation of Manners*, which I name the more willingly, because the Designs that way and this which I now recommend, were, as it were, Twins, set on foot near the same time, and chiefly by the same Persons: *A Reformation of Manners* I say, and an abounding in such Charities as this now before you, may be an effectual Means of lengthening out our Tranquility and Prosperity, and of bringing down a Blessing on the Publick Councils of the Kingdom, on Her Majesty's Person, whom God long preserve, and on Her Government, and all Her Glorious Undertakings.

This will both secure to us all our Blessings in this Life, and lay up a Foundation against the time to come. Let us therefore, as God has blessed every one of us, and most particularly as any of us have been blest in our Concerns in those Parts; let us, I say, with all Readiness and Cheerfulness of Mind, set about this *Work of Faith*, and *Labour of Love*, with the *Patience of Hope*, in our Lord Jesus Christ, as in the Sight of God and our Father, knowing that our Labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.

To whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost let us offer up all Honour, Praise and Glory, both now and for evermore. Amen.

F I N I S.

